

# Reflective Practice in Real-Time: Deepening the Dialogue to Strengthen Relationships



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# Introductions

- What brings you joy in working with families and/or staff?
- Think about a positive experience you have had partnering with a family or families.

# **Family Involvement and Family Engagement**

# What is Family Engagement?

## Family Engagement is:

- **Building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships and ongoing learning and development of parents and children.**
- **A set of beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and activities of families that support their children's positive development from early childhood through young adulthood.**
- **Happening in the home, early childhood program, school and community**
- **A shared responsibility with all those who support children's learning.**



**Parent, Family, & Community Engagement  
is:**

**Systemic, Integrated, &  
Comprehensive**

# What is *Systemic* PFCE?



PFCE beliefs & activities are carried out throughout the *entire* organization.

# What is *Integrated* PFCE?



PFCE attitudes & activities are connected to each other throughout programs in a way that support a ***holistic*** vision of engagement.

# What is *Comprehensive* PFCE?



The *full range* of strengths, interests, and needs of the adults and children are considered and staff support families by connecting them with services and resources to achieve their goals.



# Achieving excellence for children & families requires full engagement by all:

- **Parents**
- **Family Service Workers**
- **Teachers/Home Visitors**
- **Bus Drivers, Cooks, Janitors**
- **Managers**
- **Program Directors**
- **Governing Boards**
- **Community Partners**



# When grounded in foundations and impact areas, PFCE will support family outcomes

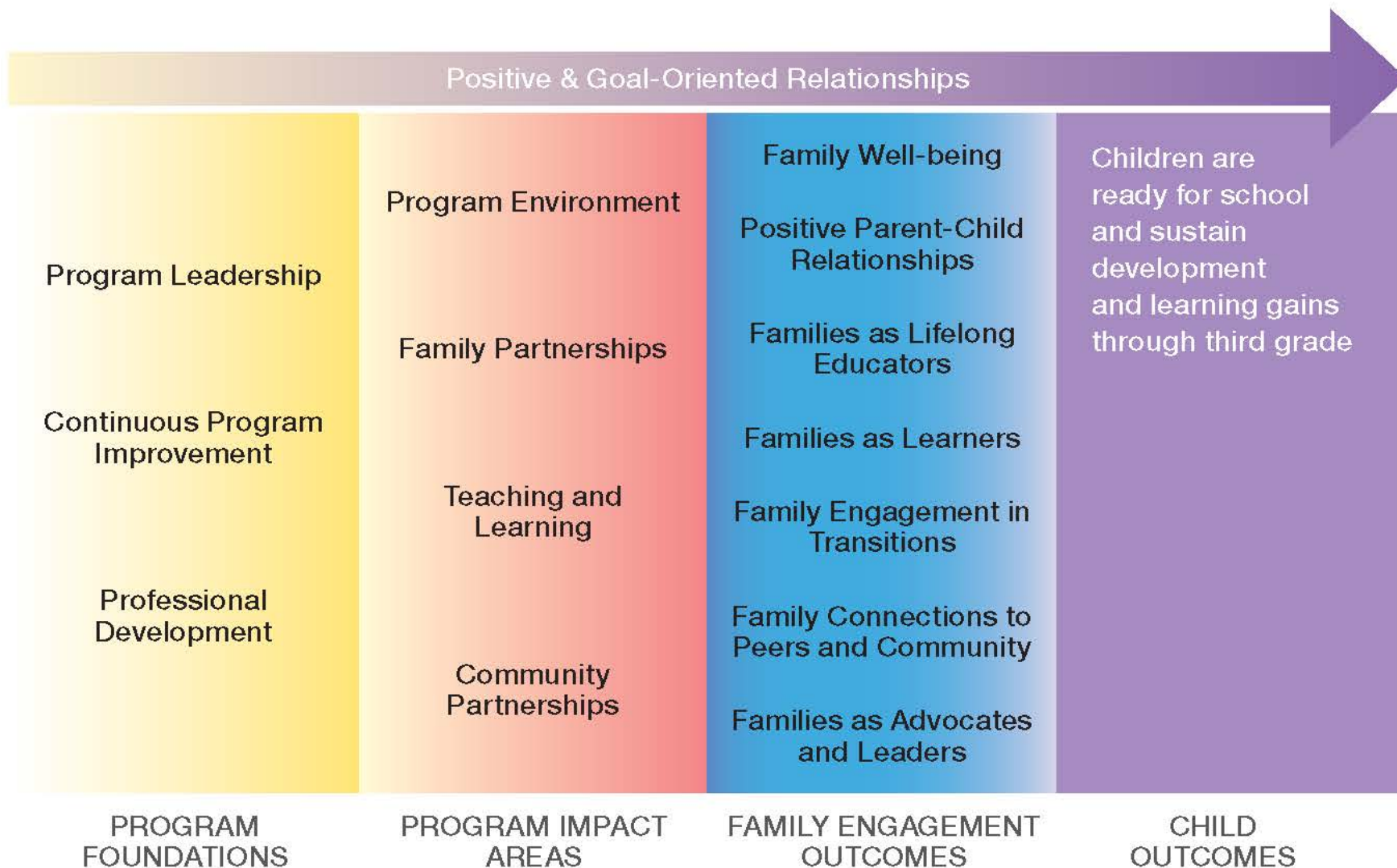
1. Family Well-Being
2. Parent-Child Relationships
3. Families as Lifelong Educators
4. Families as Learners
5. Family Engagement in Transitions
6. Family Connections with Community
7. Families as Advocates and Leaders

# And in turn, this will support child outcomes:

1. Children ready for school
2. Children sustain development and learning gains through third grade

## PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

When parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school. Parent and family engagement activities are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.



# When we actively engage families...

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## ...*All Benefit.*

- ***Children*** will be healthier and more ready for kindergarten
- ***Families*** will be more engaged in your program & in the public school
- ***Programs*** will achieve higher levels of quality
- ***Communities*** will provide stronger supports to the next generation

# Contrasts

## **Family involvement**

- Behaviors we can see and count
- Behaviors that may occur as a result of a range of different motivations, including complying with requirements
- Behaviors that may occur when material barriers (transportation, childcare, scheduling) are removed

## **Family engagement**

- Behaviors that result from attitudes and feelings that we may not be able to see or count
- Attitudes and feelings exchanged in Interactions between families and staff, and between families and children that lead to involvement outputs as well as family and child outcomes

# Differences

## **Family involvement**

- Parents show up
- Parents bring their bodies
- Staff identify and help remove material barriers

## **Family engagement**

- Parents (and staff) actively participate
- Parents (and staff) bring and offer their hearts and minds
- Parents participate in identifying and removing material barriers

# Family Involvement and Family Engagement

You can have family involvement without family engagement, but you can't have family engagement without family involvement.

Parents can show up without actively participating, but they can't actively participate until they show up.

Other people can make a parent show up, but parents' active participation is within their power alone. It is an experience of taking control of their own lives and of their children's futures.



# Family Involvement and Family Engagement

## Family Involvement

- a necessary first step to engagement: you have to show up in order to have the interactions of engagement

## Family Engagement

- can lead to more involvement (that is more showing up)
- with engagement, the quality of involvement changes, and brings the potential for change, for new behaviors beyond just showing up

# One way and two way interactions

## Family involvement

- A one way behavior: parents come to the center
- Or parents let the home visitor in

## Family engagement

- A two way interaction: parents and staff come toward each other
- Parents and staff are both changed, both change each other through this interaction

# Engagement is a relational process

- engagement is relational
- the experience of engagement includes specific qualities of the relationship – safety, trust, encouragement, mutual respect and caring and hope
- the experience of engagement leads to changes in attitude, motivation, and sense of positive possibility
- the experience of engagement leads to changes that promote PFCE family and child outcomes

# Barriers to involvement and engagement are different

## Examples of barriers to involvement

- Transportation
- Child care
- Work obligations
- Scheduling conflicts
- Bad weather

## Examples of barriers to engagement

- Fear
- Suspicion
- Distrust
- Feelings of being unwelcome, disrespected, or at risk of being overpowered
- Power imbalance
- Misunderstandings
- Beliefs about parent and teacher roles



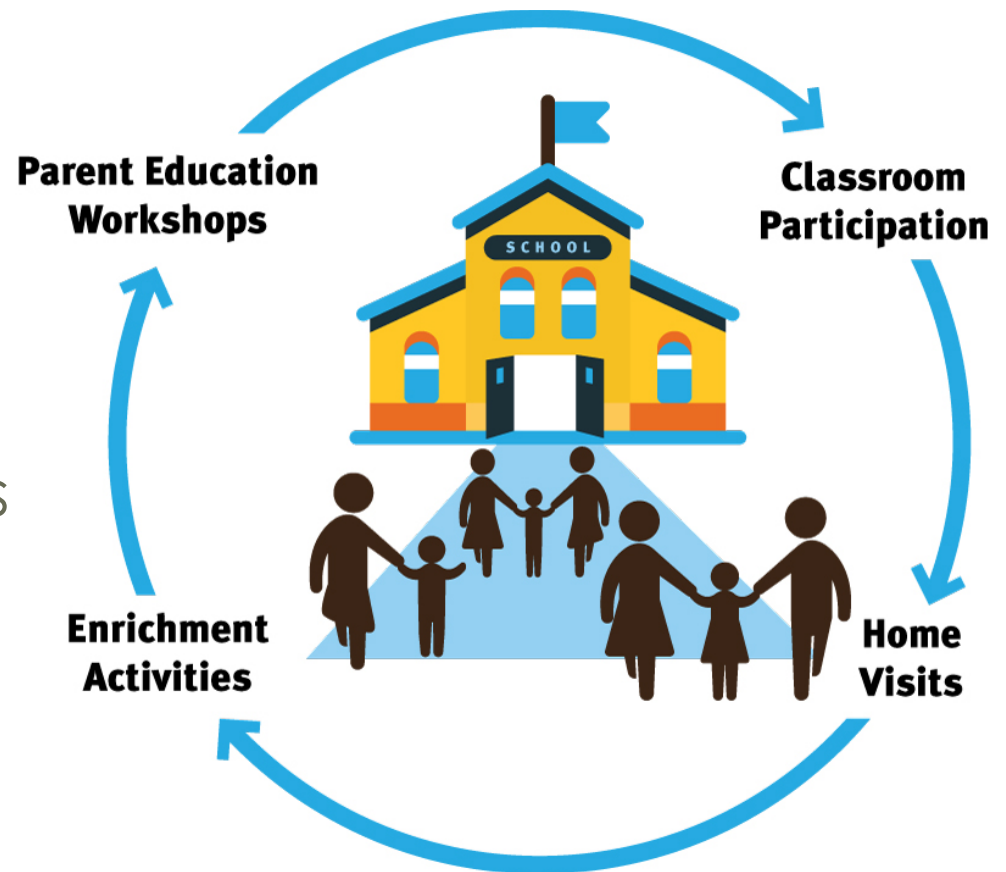
# Reflective Practice to Support Family Engagement

WestEd, Center for Child and  
Family Studies &  
South San Francisco Unified  
School District

Elita Amini Virmani  
Sheryl Chan  
Ann-Marie Wiese  
Peter Mangione

# What is PIP?

The Parent Involvement Project (PIP) aims to facilitate high-quality early learning experiences for low-income families and their preschool-aged children through four essential integrated areas:



# Reflective Practice Efforts

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- Reflective practice training for PIP Staff
- Reflective Dialogue:
  - PIP Co-Directors with PIP Supervisors
  - PIP Supervisors with PIP staff
  - Among PIP staff
- Reflective Prompts with Children and Families



# What is Reflective Practice?

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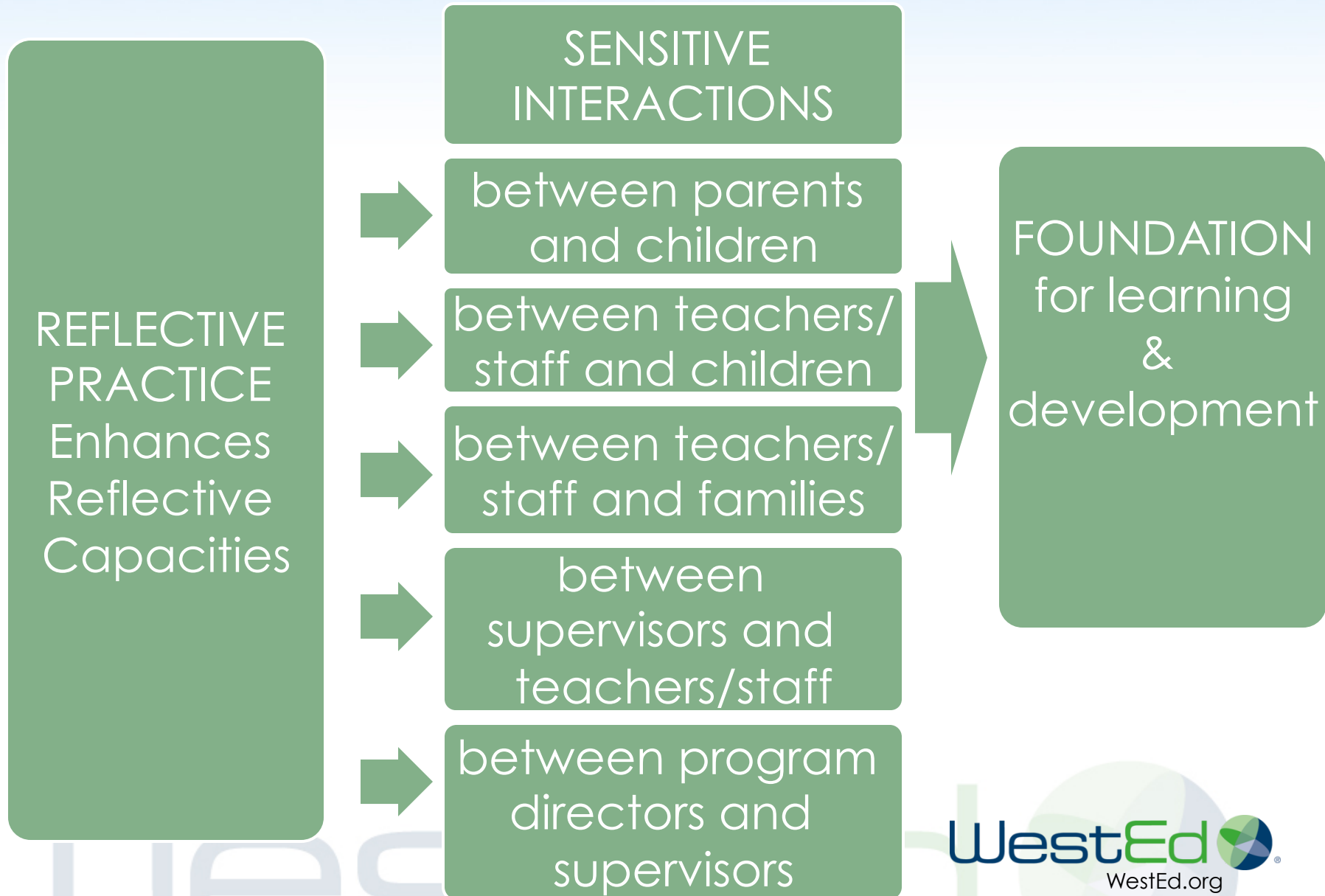
Stepping back from your interactions and examining them

- Observing
- Listening
- Wondering
- Responding

Tomlin, A., Strum, L., & Koch, S. (2009). Observe, listen, wonder, and respond: A preliminary exploration of reflective function skills in early care providers. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 30(6), 634-647.



# Why Reflective Practice?



# Reflective Practice Fosters Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

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"By engaging in reflective practice, one builds reflective capacities that lead to linguistic and cultural responsiveness in meaningful ways among, staff, children, and families."

Virmani, E.A., Wiese, A., Mangione, P.L. (in press). Pathways to Relational Family Engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families: Can Reflective Practice Guide Us?, in John A. Sutterby (ed.) *Family Involvement in Early Education and Child Care (Advances in Early Education in Day Care, Volume 20)*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

# Key Skills for Engaging in Reflective Dialogue

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- Pay attention to non-verbal messages:
  - Eye contact
  - Physical distance
  - Tone of voice
- Use open-ended questions & statements:
  - Tell me more about why you think that did/didn't work...
  - You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_, can you say more about that?
  - I am wondering...



# Real-Time Reflection

Elita Sheryl

- ✧ What do you notice?
- ✧ What do you find yourself wondering about?
- ✧ How is this relevant to your work?



# Connecting Reflective Conversation to Your Own Work

- ✧ Take a moment to think about how you might integrate reflective conversation into your own work
- ✧ Turn to a partner, share your ideas



# Using The Family Language and Interests Interview

The Fresno Language Project

Deepening Relationships for Meaningful  
Engagement with Families

Namaste مرحبا Bem Vindo Selamat Datang  
Willkommen  
Bienvenidos Bienvenue Croeso Welcome Bienvenidos أهلا وسهلا  
Benvenuti Welkom Bienvenue Bem Vindo  
Bienvenidos مرحبا Welcome Welkom Croeso  
Selamat Datang أهلا وسهلا مرحبا Namaste  
Welcome Bienvenue Bem Vindo  
Willkommen Benvenuti  
добре дошъл Καλώς ήλθατε  
Benvenuti Willkommen Benvenuti



- Supports development of new and improved professional development and early learning solutions
- Helps spread them
- Works to build early childhood innovation capacity



# Fresno Language Project Partners



# Aim of the Fresno Language Project

**. Grade level academic achievement and English language proficiency for all children by fourth grade with continued development in home language**

# Myth or Fact?



<http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Challenging%20Common%20Myths%20Update.pdf>

# Based on Evidence and Approach developed by Dr. Linda Espinosa



- Personalized Oral Language Learning (POLL) Strategies
- Targeted Language Model for each classroom or home
- Family Engagement
- Family Language and Interests Interview



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## Real-Time Reflection

Renee      Chris

What strikes you most about this conversation? (Non-verbal, verbal, attitude, stance, etc.)

Are there points made that you want to apply to your own work with families? Others?

# Small Group Discussion







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